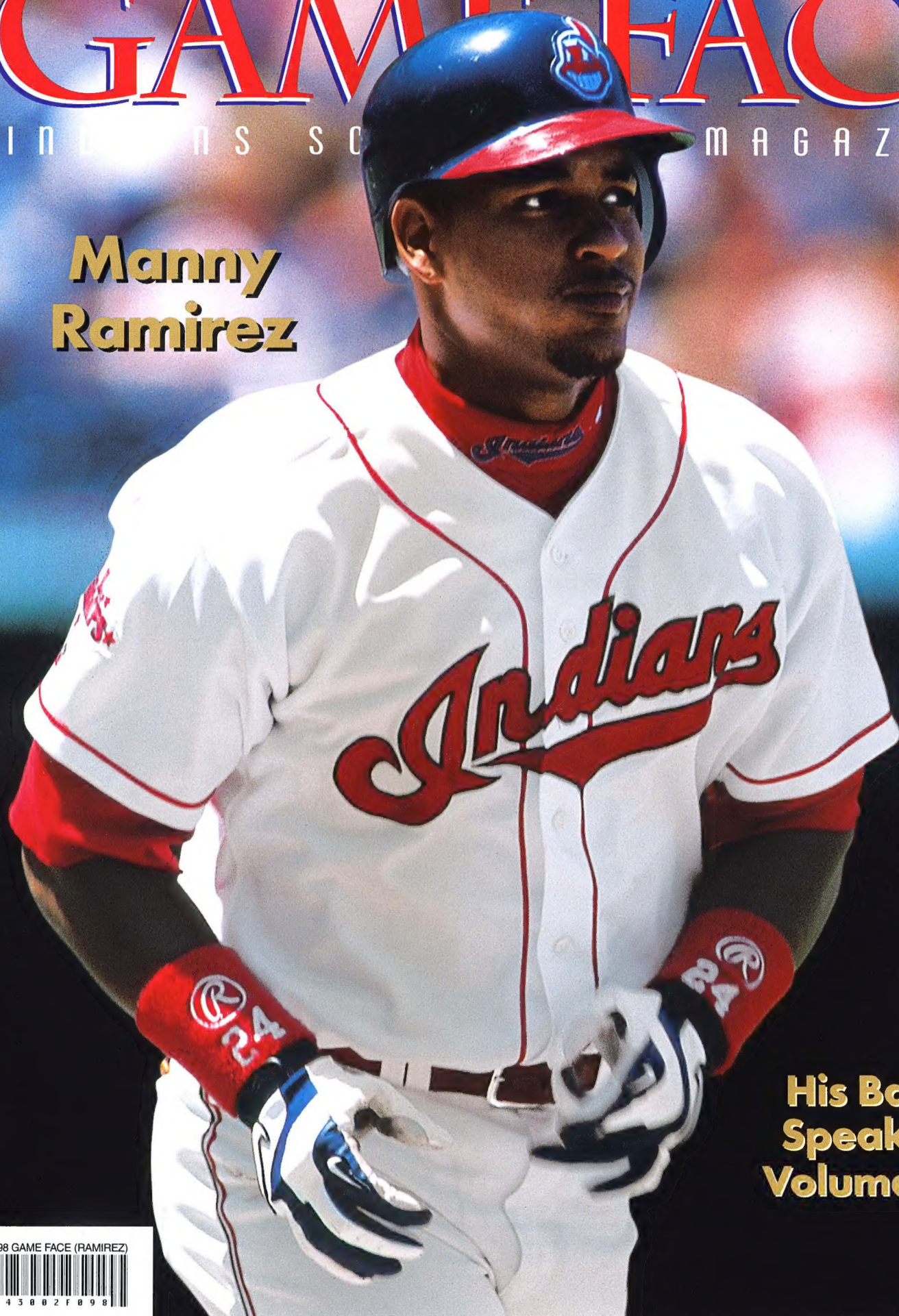


GAME FACE

INDIANS SPORTS MAGAZINE

**Manny
Ramirez**



**His Bat
Speaks
Volumes!**

2.50

SEP98 GAME FACE (RAMIREZ)



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Photo: Gregory Drezdzon

Indians

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DOUG JONES

BETTER DAYS IN CLEVELAND

by Steve Herrick

"What an irony. Now everybody wants to play here."

— Tribe reliever Doug Jones comments on the difference between his past and his current days with the Indians

One will excuse Doug Jones for doing a double take when he was traded back to the Indians on July 23. After all, an awful lot has changed on the Cleveland baseball scene since Jones left the Indians as a free agent following the 1991 season. And all those changes could confuse a guy who hasn't been around in awhile.

"I almost went down to the lake where the old stadium was," said Jones. "This is a great ballpark. You need a map to get around this place."

Jones, now in his 11th Major League season, is poised to pitch in his first Post Season.

Jones knows the differences don't stop there. Not only did the Indians play in the worst facility in baseball, they lost a

club-record 105 games in his final season in Cleveland. Jones has watched the dramatic changes from a distance. The Indians have won three straight American League Central Division titles and have been in the World Series two of the last three years. Even though Jones is now 41 years old, has been in professional baseball since 1978, and is in his 11th Major League season, the trade that brought him to Cleveland for Eric Plunk, a swap of right-handed relief pitchers, got his blood pumping.

"What an irony," he said. "Now everybody wants to play here. This has

Jones Con't — Pg. 18



Photos: Gregory Drezdson



"That was quite a moment. I didn't expect all that. It got me all charged up."

— Doug Jones, regarding the standing ovation he received when announced as the Indians reliever for the first time at Jacobs Field



Photo: Gregory Drezdson

Jones is not your typical "flamethrower" reliever. Instead of relying on heat, he depends upon off-speed pitches.

always been a good town. Now it's a good baseball town."

Not everything has changed. In 1991, John Hart had taken over as the general manager, Mike Hargrove was named manager in July of that season, and Mark Wiley was in his first tenure as pitching coach.

"I'm here with familiar people in unfamiliar surroundings," Jones said. "It's spooky, but it might be fun. It's a big difference. It's a little reunion."

The 1991 season is something Jones would just as soon forget.

"The thing I remember most about that season was that we made something like 48 roster moves by the All-Star break," he said. "Guys were coming and going all year long. It was pretty much a disaster."

Jones' first go-around in Cleveland was anything but a disaster, however.

Between the time he arrived in Cleveland in 1986 and the time he left, he saved 128 games, a mark that still stands as a club record. "I don't think

about it much, but I guess it's kind of neat to have it," he said.

Jones was one of the game's top closers in three of those years. He saved 37 games in 1988, 32 in 1989, and 43 in 1990 — a club record until Jose Mesa saved 46 in 1995. Jones also made the American League All-Star team in each of those seasons, but he wasn't your typical closer. While most closers come into the game throwing 95 mph, Jones confounded hitters with a dizzying array of off-speed pitches. And many of his

saves came when he entered games in the seventh inning and shut opponents down the rest of the way.

"That was odd, but we didn't have any help in the bullpen," said Jones.

Jones lost his touch in 1991. He finished the season with a 4-8 record, a 5.54 ERA and only seven saves. He even spent some time in the Minors and became a free agent at the end of the season. Despite the unhappy ending, Jones was disappointed when he left the Indians.

"I was here when these guys were in their first or second years," he said. "Guys like Sandy (Alomar) and Charles (Nagy) and (Jim) Thome were just coming up. You could see they had potential. You knew something was going to happen. That's why it was frustrating not to spend more time here. Watching that team play, you knew there wasn't anything that was going to stop them."

Jones' save totals are even more remarkable considering the Indians finished sixth twice and fourth once during those three years. In other words, there weren't many save situations to start with and Jones took advantage of almost every one of them.

"It was my first opportunity to play in the Major Leagues, so even though they were bad teams it was still special to me," he said. "I always felt like a rookie in that clubhouse, but I still have a lot of good memories from those years."

Some people thought Jones was finished following the '91 season, but the man who pitched in the Minors for eight years before making it to the big leagues for good wasn't about to pack it in.

He proved he wasn't done. Jones saved 150 games for Houston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, the Chicago Cubs, and Milwaukee between 1992 and 1997. He was selected to the National League All-Star team in 1992 (with the Astros) and in 1994 (with the Phillies). His best overall season might have come last year when he went 6-6 with 36 saves and a 2.02 ERA with the Brewers.

"It worked out great," he said. "I was just looking for a job. Houston wanted a





WELCOME TO JACOBS FIELD



Photo: Gregory Drezdson

"It is our intention to make our home a safe, comfortable, family-oriented facility so every trip to Jacobs Field is most enjoyable."

"We believe these fan ground rules will ensure the intimate environment that we all seek."

— **Dennis Lehman, Indians Executive Vice President of Business**

Baseball's most important pitch this season won't come from a mound. In an effort to combat drinking and driving, Major League Baseball, together with the Techniques for Effective Alcohol Management (TEAM) coalition, continues to make a comprehensive appeal to fans this year. The message: **PLEASE DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE!**

As part of the TEAM program, each Major League club reviews its alcohol policies and runs public service announcements asking fans to drink responsibly and warns them against the consequences of drinking and driving.

The Cleveland Indians want you safe, because we want you back. Please drink responsibly.

In an effort to make everyone's visit to the Ballpark as safe and enjoyable as possible, a list of guidelines has been developed.

The Indians ask that you follow these guidelines, or be subject to ejection from the Ballpark, and in some cases, subject to criminal prosecution by the Cleveland Police Department.

To ensure that each game is a pleasant experience for each and every guest, the Indians have established the following **"Ground Rules:"**

- Jacobs Field is a non-smoking facility with designated smoking areas. Non-smoking areas include: the entire seating bowl of the Ballpark (including the outdoor seating of Suites and Club Seats); KidsLand; and all public rest rooms. Smoking is permitted in the following areas: Back Yard; Patio area on the Main Concourse; all three concourse levels (Main, Mezzanine, and Upper Deck) on the East Ninth Street side of the Ballpark and Upper Deck pavilion area on the Carnegie side of the Ballpark (all of these locations are open-air areas with picnic tables, concession stands, and rest room facilities nearby); Bleacher Concourse on the Eagle

Avenue side of the Ballpark. In addition, the Terrace Club and Club Lounge have both smoking and non-smoking areas. Jacobs Field has signage identifying designated smoking areas for your convenience.

- Cans, glass bottles, plastic beverage containers, thermos bottles, and squeeze bottles are not permitted into Jacobs Field.
- Due to security concerns, hard-sided coolers and containers are not permitted. Soft-sided containers and coolers are permitted.
- Food items and juice boxes are permitted inside the Ballpark, provided they are not inside a hard-sided cooler or container.
- Pets are not allowed inside the Ballpark. However, guide dogs for persons with sight disabilities are permitted.
- The resale (scalping) of Indians tickets is strictly prohibited and subject to prosecution by the Cleveland Police Department.
- Fans are permitted to bring and display banners, provided they do not interfere with the game, obstruct the view of fans, or carry obscene, political or commercial messages. Banners may be hung from the facing of the Upper Deck. Poles and sticks are strictly prohibited.
- Fans may bring small umbrellas into Jacobs Field as long as they do not interfere with other fans' enjoyment of the game. Large golf umbrellas are discouraged.
- Cameras and video recorders are permitted. However, any resale of the photography or video is strictly prohibited. Team name, logos, and players' likenesses are all copyrighted material.
- Persons observed breaking the law (eg. using illegal drugs, or drinking alcohol underage) will be subject to immediate ejection and/or criminal prosecution.
- Persons using obscene or abusive language, or engaging in any other antisocial conduct offensive to those around them, will be asked by Indians personnel to cease this conduct. If the offensive conduct persists, those involved will be ejected from Jacobs Field.
- Persons entering the playing field, throwing or attempting to throw objects onto the field, will be subject to immediate ejection from Jacobs Field and/or criminal prosecution.

If you have any questions, comments, suggestions, or problems, please visit one the Guest Service Centers located at Section 116 of the Main Concourse and in Section 519 of the Upper Concourse, or see one of our hosts throughout the Ballpark. The Indians thank you for your cooperation.



Jones Con't from Pg. 18

closer. It worked out fine. I knew I wasn't done pitching."

Hart is glad to have Jones back on his side. "He's had great years and he's had ups and downs," said Hart. "He's very brave. He's never going to panic. I think he will be a great influence on our ballclub. We've always liked Doug. He's a veteran guy who gives us a different look. He's a soft tosser who pounds the strike zone. He's a great competitor with a big heart."

Indians fans showed Jones they hadn't forgotten him. When he made his first appearance with the Indians on July 26, he was given a standing ovation by the Jacobs Field crowd.

"That was quite a moment," he said. "I didn't expect all that. It got me all charged up."

Jones admits he was struggling with the Brewers at the time of the deal. He was 3-4 with a 5.17 ERA and 12 saves.

"The way things were going I expected to get released," he said. "I wouldn't

have blamed them for it. I wasn't pitching well enough to deserve to play. That's why this is a bit of a surprise. I realized I wasn't going to fit in when Bob Wickman was doing such a good job. I was expecting something to happen."

So while Jones was expecting something to happen, he never thought he'd end up back in Cleveland. "I was very surprised," he said. "I never dreamed I would wind up with a pennant winner. This will be a new experience for me."

Despite his accomplishments Jones has never appeared in a post-season game. He's hoping that will change come October.

"That's one place I haven't been," he said. "I'm going to be leaning on the other guys who've been there before. I'll be like a kid in the candy store probably."

This trip to the candy store could end up with the sweetest ending of all — a World Series ring. ♥

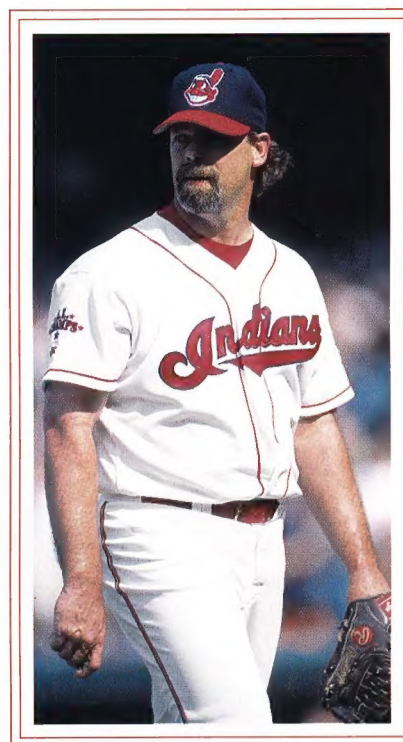


Photo: Gregory Drezdson

Back in Cleveland, the Indians all-time **save** leader now has the opportunity to add to his club record.

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MANNY RAMIREZ

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

by Allen Davis

Ramirez made his mark early as a serious threat at the plate.

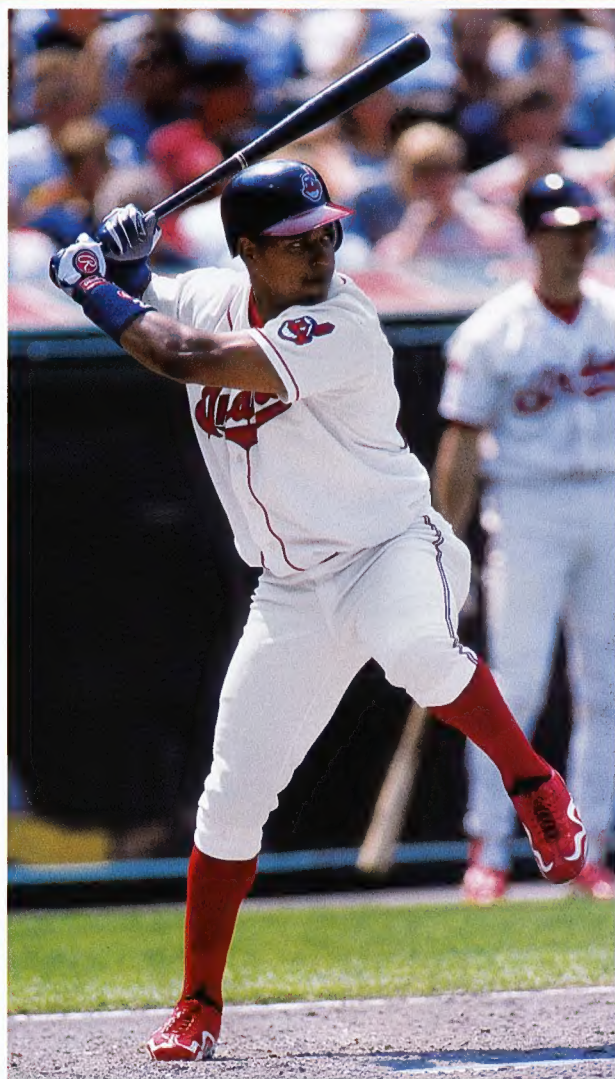


Photo: Gregory Drezdzon

Today's professional athlete lives in a virtual fishbowl. There are some who can easily cater to the public's insatiable curiosity and make their lives an open book. There are others who go out of

their way to avoid the public attention that their celebrity attracts.

Manny Ramirez falls into the latter group. Although approachable, he politely shuns many interview requests.

"I just don't like doing those things," Ramirez says.

So the 26-year-old outfielder lets his bat do the talking. Quietly, in his fifth full season with the Indians, Ramirez is steadily climbing up the ladder of the club's all-time leader in several offensive categories.

In three of the last four seasons, he has hit at least 30 homers and driven in more than 100 runs. Already, he is second in

career grand slam homers with eight, trailing Al Rosen by only one. He is 11th on the club's career home run list and should surpass

Joe Carter by early next season. Barring a serious injury, he will rank among the top 10 in the others when his career is said and done.

"Manny's at a stage where he's just crossing over into how good a hitter he can be," says Indians hitting instructor Charlie Manuel, one of his biggest boosters. "I've always looked at Manny as someone who could hit 30-40 home runs and have a .330 batting average."

Manuel's association with Ramirez goes back to 1993 when he managed the Indians AAA club in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Ramirez played only 40 games there on his relentless march to the Majors, but made enough of an impression on Manuel that he predicted greatness for the young slugger even then.

Manuel, of course, was not alone in his assessment. Since 1991, when the Indians made Ramirez their number one pick in the June draft, the high school phenom was touted as one of the future stars of the Tribe. He has lived up to, if not exceeded, those expectations.

Mickey White, the Indians scouting director at the time Ramirez was selected, saw in the talented athlete a player who loved baseball.

"He reminded me of [the late Pirate outfielder Roberto] Clemente," White says. "He had a passion for the game. I grew up watching Clemente and he was one of the best hitters I'd ever seen."

To White, now with the Tampa Bay Devil Rays, scouting is a crapshoot. "I'm not that smart," he says. "But I loved what I saw and that's really all I went on. The greatest thrill has been



watching somebody you really like as a young kid approach the game the way he does and watch him grow the way he has. That's beyond anybody's control or imagination."

There are critics, though, who will point out an air of indifference in his attitude, occasional lackadaisical play, and lapses of

concentration. Both Manuel and White, veteran baseball men, sharply dispute those criticisms.

"I read what they write about him in the press and I hear the



Ramirez tracks down a fly ball in stride, at left, and by diving, above.

remarks they say about him," Manuel says. "Manny practices real hard and he's real sincere about what he does."

"To a certain extent, he's just beginning to settle in as a Major Leaguer," White adds. "There's not a player in the big leagues that doesn't peak and valley. The younger ones peak and valley more than the veterans."

Indians manager Mike Hargrove is also quick to defend his rightfielder. "We drafted him and rushed the heck out of him," says Hargrove. "He probably could have benefitted from another year in AAA. There have been some growing pains, but I don't know of any rightfielder in the league I would want other than Manny."

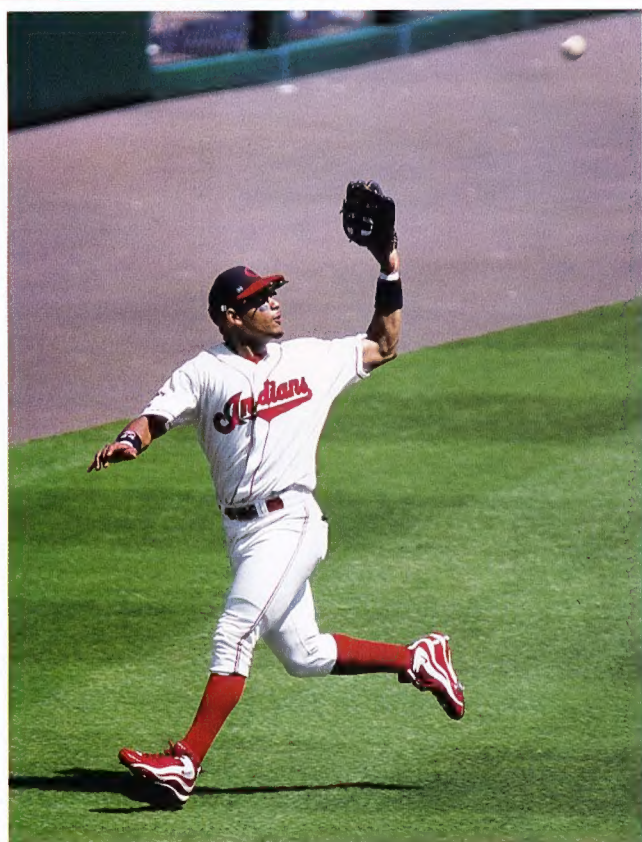
At the same time, the little boy inside him comes out at times.

"Manny's had to make great strides in his defense. But even when he was getting all those criticisms, he was leading the league in outfield assists!"

— Tribe hitting instructor, **Charlie Manuel**, feels much criticism of Manny has been unfounded

"He reminded me of [the late Pirate outfielder Roberto] Clemente."

— **Mickey White**, former director of scouting for the Indians, commenting on his impressions of a young Manny Ramirez



Photos: Gregory Drezdson

Ramirez Con't — Pg. 48



Ramirez is known among his teammates as a practical joker and at other times the butt of jokes. He has worn coach Dan Williams' pants during batting practice. Williams is twice the size of Ramirez.

Ramirez could be called the pioneer of the bleached-hair craze that has swept the clubhouse this season. Earlier in the year, he was sporting a perm with blond tips which he has since discarded. Others, seemingly following his lead, have donned the bleached look, making Manny appear conservative by comparison.

"For this game, that's great," says Manuel. "Every team needs those kind of guys to break the tension."

"Sometimes people take those things out of context and say Manny's not focused and not into what he's doing. Nothing could be further from the truth. Manny works real hard on his game."

White believes Manny's reluctance to speak to the media adds to the misconceptions.

"When you don't speak to people, they tend to say things about you," he says. "This is a game that you learn on a daily basis. Manny's had to make great strides in his defense. But even when he was getting all those criticisms, he was leading the league in outfield assists!"

And Hargrove states his feelings quite simply: "Offensively and defensively Manny's been very good for us."

Manuel has worked with Ramirez on the finer points of hitting, such as what to expect in certain pitch counts. Above all, Manuel stresses discipline at the plate. He feels his pupil is learning that lesson well.

"Sometimes, after he hits a double or something, he'll come back to the dugout and tell me, 'Charlie, I looked for that ball and made sure it was in my zone.' That shows you he's being

patient. That's what makes guys great hitters. The whole secret is getting a ball that you like to hit."

It's difficult to separate Ramirez from baseball, because he has few interests outside of the game. From the time he arrived in the United States in 1986, at the age of 13, it is the only thing that has helped him deal with the many differences he encountered. New York City was a far cry from his native Santo Domingo, but baseball was still the same. It was a game he loved as a child, having learned to play it on the streets of his homeland. His role models were the many successful Dominican players who had made their mark in the Major Leagues.

It was baseball that kept Ramirez from falling prey to the crime and violence of the drug-riddled mean streets of his Washington Heights neighborhood. And baseball has enabled Ramirez to make good on his promise to move his family from the hustle and bustle of New York to the relatively relaxed lifestyle of his Westlake neighborhood.

But Ramirez is uncomfortable with any public acknowledgment of the stardom he has attained.

When Hargrove named the outfielder to replace the Yankees' Bernie Williams to the 1998 American League All-Star team, Ramirez told reporters it was no big deal because, "years from now no one would remember who was on the All-Star team." If he were to be believed, he would rather have spent the All-Star break riding the Raptor at Cedar Point Amusement Park.

Privately it was a different matter. Ramirez couldn't thank Hargrove enough for selecting him and showed his appreciation by hitting two home runs in a 2-1 Indians victory over Kansas City.

It's an obvious conclusion that Ramirez is happiest when he is on the field. His coaches and manager believe, as long as the burden of greater expectations is not placed upon him, Ramirez will continue to do what he has been doing — hitting 30 home runs, driving in 100 runs, and playing a solid right field. Anything more will be icing on the cake. ▀



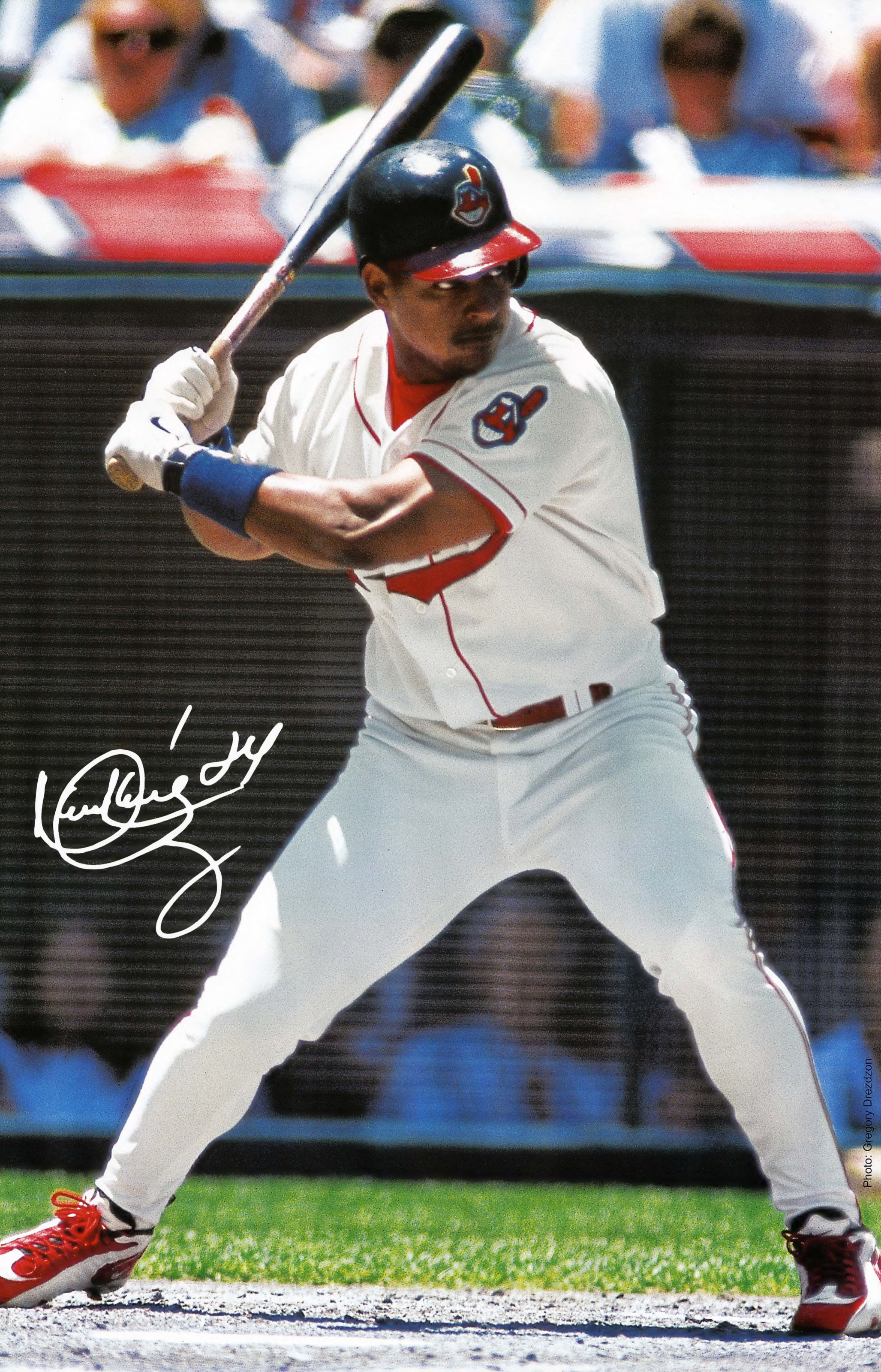
Photo: Gregory Drezdson

According to his teammates, Ramirez is a practical joker who also knows how to take a ribbing.

"... I don't know of any rightfielder in the league I would want other than Manny."

— Indians manager Mike Hargrove





Paul G. 24

Reed Con't from Pg. 10

"It was important that we get another quality setup guy. Reed has very special stuff, a big sinker and a good slider, and he takes the ball on a regular basis."

**— Indians General Manager,
John Hart**

Reed won't shatter many bats with an overpowering fastball, but there are other ways to get people out.

"I usually throw in the mid 80s," he said. "I can get up to 88, but I'm better when I'm around 84. My ball moves better."

Reed has been confounding baseball people for quite awhile. After graduating from Chatsworth High School in California, he attended Lewis & Clark College in Idaho, where he was a starting pitcher. His team won back-to-back NAIA titles in 1987 and '88, but when the amateur draft rolled around, his phone never rang.

"I wasn't even a drafted player," he said. "There were 88 rounds that year and nobody took me. When that happens you know your future isn't going to be as a starter."

Reed signed with the Giants and began his pro career at Pocatello, Idaho in rookie ball. Since then he says all of his pro appearances have been in relief. He made it to the big leagues in 1992, was

taken by the Rockies in the expansion draft before the 1993 season, and re-signed with the Giants following last season. Going into the 1998 campaign, he was 26-18 with 15 saves and a 3.62 ERA in 347 career appearances.

Reed is proof that scouting and radar guns aren't everything when it comes to measuring a pitcher.

"Everybody is so much into guns that they don't look inside to see what a guy is all about and see the fortitude he has," said Reed.

Hart likes what Reed is all about. "It was important that we get another quality setup guy," he said. "Reed has very special stuff, a big sinker and a good slider, and he takes the ball on a regular basis."

Reed's positives might not have been good enough for 88 rounds in a draft 10 years ago, but they're just fine with the Indians. Reed's Cleveland debut had a happy ending. That's something both team and player are hoping to see plenty of in the future. ♦

SABR: The Cleveland Connection

Cleveland is home of the international Society for American Baseball Research and its Jack Graney Chapter. If you have a passion for baseball, SABR is the best ticket for year-round baseball enjoyment.

What did Jim Thome do in 1997 that had been done only 16 other times in the majors this century?

Which father-son pitching combo has better stats-- the Bagby's or the Stottlemire's?

What offensive statistics do Gus and Buddy Bell rank first in for fathers and sons?

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Photos: Gregory Drezdson



HOW TO SCORE

Baseball fans can enjoy the sport to the fullest extent by keeping track of the game and pinpointing those big plays that bring victory or defeat. All you need is a basic knowledge of the rules.

Although there are countless scoring methods, experts use a simple code based on numbering players by position and tracing action through the use of symbols. It's easy and fun.

In fact, why not devise your own scoring system with the basic suggestions on this page.

One such suggestion on player substitutions is to use a heavy or wavy line under or over a box to indicate a change, either of a player or batter.

If a batter flies to the rightfielder, merely use the figure 9. If it is a foul fly, use 9F.

Now that you are an official "scorer," you can really enjoy baseball games.

TEAM	Pos.	1	2
Rightfielder	9	4-6 W	
2nd Baseman	4	3 ④FO	
1st Baseman	3	=	
Centerfielder	8	SF 8	
Designated Hitter	DH	K	
Leftfielder	7		4-6 —
Catcher	2		DP 4-6-3
3rd Baseman	5		⊖
Shortstop	6		7
Pitcher	1		
TOTALS	R / H	1 / 1	1 / 2

Walked and was forced out at second (2nd baseman to shortstop).

Reached first on fielder's choice when runner was forced out, advanced to third on a double by 3rd place hitter, scored on 4th place hitter's sacrifice fly.

Doubled; did not advance further.

Flew out to center field scoring runner on third.

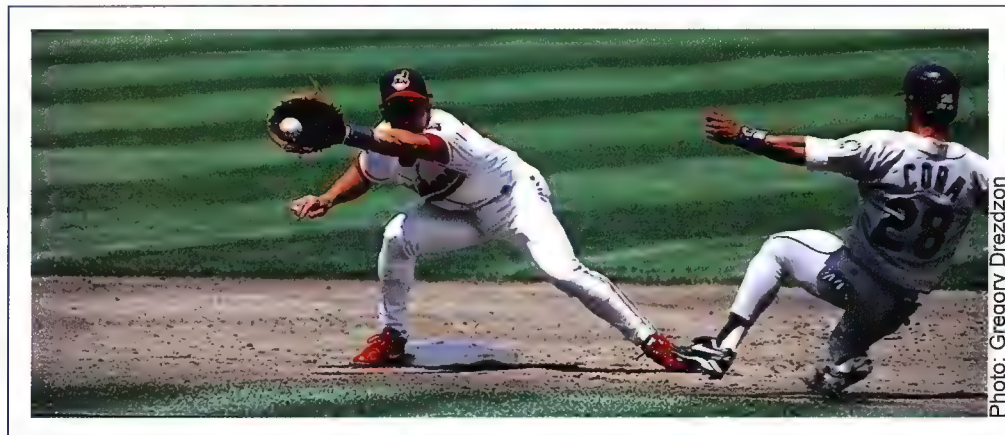
Struck out — end of the inning.

Singled; later forced out at second (2nd baseman to shortstop in first half of double play).

Hit into double play (2nd baseman to shortstop to 1st baseman).

Hit home run.

Flew out to leftfielder — end of inning.



Can You Score This Play ?

The ball was hit to the shortstop, who threw it to the second baseman. The second baseman was able to force out the runner who had been at first. He then threw the ball to the first baseman to get the batter out, turning a double play.

In this example...

The hitter reached first base on a walk, stole second, advanced to third on a pitcher's balk, and scored on a wild pitch.

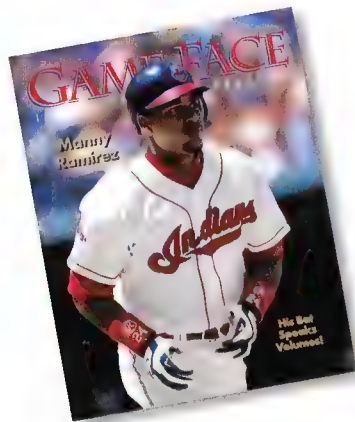
BK	SB
⊖	W

Use these SYMBOLS for Plays

Single	—
Double	=
Triple	≡
Home Run	⊖
Error	E
Foul Fly	F
Double Play	DP
Fielder's Choice	FC
Hit by Pitcher	HP
Wild Pitch	WP
Stolen Base	SB
Sacrifice Hit	SH
Sacrifice Fly	SF
Caught Stealing	CS
Passed Ball	PB
Balk	BK
Struck Out	K
Base on Balls	BB
Forced Out	FO
Intentional Walk	IW



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"... the fans have an equity stake in the ballpark. In a lot of ways it's their park. ... They have really embraced it, and Jacobs Field has become a rallying point for the whole town."

— Dennis Lehman

Another enthusiastic, sell-out crowd to cheer on the Tribe.



Photo: Gregory Drezdson

base, and make it fun to come to the ballpark again."

Even if it was a drafty, creaky, old one.

Once the voters approved the taxes necessary to build what would become Jacobs Field, Lehman and Overton became two of the point men in the behind-the-scenes planning stages for what the new ballpark would look like. "We began brainstorming in the early 1990s on what we would like to have in a new ballpark," Lehman said.

Lehman admits he had a vision for the new ballpark that was at the top of his priority list. "I thought openness was important," he said. "Especially being located in an urban setting, we wanted a good feel to the park for pedestrians who could walk up or drive by and look into it and think, 'Gee, that would be a nice place to go.' What we didn't want was a fortress, where there were huge walls all the way around it."

Lehman and Overton toured other new ballparks around the country, making lists of **do's** and **don'ts** for the new Cleveland ballpark.

While formulating the design, Lehman and Overton consulted all the department heads in the organization, including the baseball operations people. "I remember Mike Hargrove coming to meetings, and he and John Hart were involved in selecting everything from the

style of dressing cubicles in the clubhouse, to the carpeting, to the outfield dimensions," Lehman said.

As the design evolved, there was one major concern. "We were worried that, with the outfield dimensions, we might be creating a bandbox," Lehman said. "But we ran tests in a wind tunnel and had an aeronautical engineer make his best guesses on trajectory of balls, and we finally decided that the way we wanted to build it, the park would still be a fair one — that home runs wouldn't be flying out of it all the time."

Tribe owner Richard E. Jacobs was very involved with the design as well. "Dick really knows what he wants," said Lehman. "When it got down to the nitty gritty, he was the one who would make the final decision. There were no details that were too small for him not to be consulted."

Lehman and Overton constantly make unprompted testimonials to Jacobs' skills in dealing with people and running an efficient organization.

"Dick's greatest asset is he's a tremendous facilitator," said Overton. "He'll bring up topics and have us debate the topic in front of him, and we'll arrive at a solution that everyone is comfortable with. He has a way of bringing up things that at first blush don't seem appealing. But it gets you thinking outside your box. He really challenges you."

When Jacobs Field opened in the spring of 1994, it did so to almost unanimous acclaim nationally. The new ballpark took its place alongside Oriole Park at Camden Yards as the two leading examples of what the newest generation of retro-styled, modern-convenienced, baseball-only ballparks should be.

"I think we came very close to what we were shooting for," said Lehman.

And the response by Indians fans further stamped Jacobs Field as being one of the country's best new sports facilities. Sell-outs quickly became the norm. Indeed, in a stunning turnaround, after being at the bottom of the heap in home attendance in the Majors for most of the previous three decades, the Indians in

1996 became the first team in history to sell out its entire home season before the first pitch was thrown. Then they did it again in 1997. And again in 1998.



Photo: Gregory Drezdson

Jacobs Field, Home of Baseball's Best Fans.

"I thought openness was important . . . we wanted a good feel to the park for pedestrians who could walk up or drive by and look into it and think, 'Gee, that would be a nice place to go.' What we didn't want was a fortress, where there were huge walls all the way around it."

—Dennis Lehman describing the Indians' goals during the planning of Jacobs Field

"... our job is to make the highs higher, and the lows not so low."

—Jeff Overton, regarding a marketing/promotions goal of the front office

"There's no way we expected to have this type of reception by the fans," said Lehman. "Our projections indicated that once we moved into the new ballpark we'd have a couple of good years, but then it would flatten out after two or three years."

Lehman pointed to the hostile reaction by many fans to a Jimmy Buffett concert, held in the ballpark the first year it opened, as an example of the bond Tribe fans feel toward Jacobs Field. "That reminded us that the fans have an equity stake in the ballpark," said Lehman. "In a lot of ways it's their park. And they didn't want the field damaged as can happen with a concert. They have really embraced Jacobs Field. It has become a rallying point for the whole town."

The job of the business, marketing, and — oh, by the way — the baseball departments is to keep that special Jacobs-Field feeling going.

"A lot of teams can be successful for one or two years, but it's the quality organizations that can sustain it for several years," said Overton. **"Building enthusiasm and loyalty is one thing. But keeping it is another.** Our job is to keep bringing the fans back."

Overton said he believes part of the reason for the Indians' success is their honesty with the public. "We try to be very honest with our fans," he said. "We'll say, 'Here is where we're at. Here's where we're going. And here's what it's going to cost.' When fans know what you're trying to accomplish, it makes it more tolerable when we announce a ticket increase."

And good marketing is more than just selling tickets. "Everyone looks only at ticket sales," said Overton. "That's all well and good. But ticket sales are the finality of our relationship with the fan. We also want to get them to want to watch the team on TV, listen to the team on radio, and wear Indians merchandise. All those things make people passionate fans, which helps to drive ticket sales. If someone is not a fan, the price of a ticket is not what's standing in their way. If they don't come to the game, it's because they don't feel connected to our product."

Obviously, Indians fans feel connected to their team.

"We can control the environment here," said Lehman. "We can keep the place clean and attractive, and a safe place to come to a game. Plus we can give them good value for their money. Then when you have a championship caliber team, you've got everything hitting on all cylinders."

And it's the job of the business and marketing side of the organization to maintain that interest even when the baseball side doesn't produce a World Series team.

"Look," said Overton, "this team is not going to win every year. If that was the case, all of us might as well go home. But our job is to make the highs higher, and the lows not so low."

And when done well, there are rewards unlike those in most other businesses.

"The most enjoyable part of my job," said Lehman, "is seeing people enjoying themselves. You see them walking up to the ballpark with a twinkle in their eye as they come in, knowing that they are going to an **event**. That's a nice payoff. With many jobs, you don't see the end result as clearly as you do in this one. That's very satisfying." ♥



THE PLAYERS



Photo: Gregory Drezdson



BOTTOM OF THE NINTH



Photo: Gregory Drezdson

“Move it or lose it, pal — the Tribe’s about to bat!”